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General Assembly
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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-ninth year

Identical letters dated 2 September 2014 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

In every action and word, Israel, the occupying Power, is proving its total rejection of peace, preferring instead to persist with its illegal settlement activities and annexation schemes, imposition of blockade, use of force, arrest and detention of civilians, and countless other measures of collective punishment and repression against the Palestinian civilian population under its 47-year military occupation. And, with every action and word, Israel is destroying what little viability remains of the two-State solution for peace on the basis of the pre-1967 borders.

In the span of a week since the ceasefire agreement in Cairo that brought an end to Israel's criminal aggression against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip, where thousands of Palestinians, including children and women, were slaughtered and wounded by the Israeli occupying forces and massive destruction was inflicted throughout Gaza, Israel, the occupying Power, has carried on systematically with its vindictive, retaliatory and illegal behaviour against the Palestinian people and their land, leaving no doubt as to its cynical, deliberate intentions to perpetuate its occupation by all unlawful means, while falsely claiming victimhood and a desire for peace.

Israel's intensification of its illegal settlement campaign in the Occupied State of Palestine, including in East Jerusalem, in grave contravention of the Fourth Geneva Convention, United Nations resolutions, and the clear demands of the international community for a halt to this illegal colonization campaign, is one of the most blatant indicators of the Israeli rejection of peace. On 31 August 2014, the Government of Israel issued orders for the seizure of nearly 4,000 dunums of Palestinian land, constituting approximately 1,000 acres, in an area between Bethlehem and Al-Khalil in the West Bank. Israeli occupying forces posted orders for the confiscation of this land, which is privately owned by several Palestinian families, and declared it to be "state land" for Israel.

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This decision represents the largest Israeli land grab in the Occupied State of Palestine in at least three decades. Moreover, Israeli officials have publicly declared that a political directive to expedite the seizure of the land was issued in direct retaliation for the killing of three Israeli settlers in June. Peace Now, an Israeli organization tracking illegal settlement activities, has stated that if this seizure of land is to proceed, it would "dramatically change the reality" in the area, as it facilitates the expansion of illegal Israeli settlements, particularly the so-called "Gvaot" settlement and the so-called "Gush Etzion bloc" of settlements, which would further fragment, isolate and suffocate the Palestinian cities, towns and villages in this area of the southern West Bank, including, inter alia, the villages of Surif, Jaba'a and Wadi Fukin.

At the same time, the occupying Power has also continued with its demolition of Palestinian properties and displacement of Palestinian civilians as part and parcel of its illegal, expansionist colonization schemes. This has included the demolition today of a dairy factory in Al-Khalil and five Bedouin homes and four farming structures east of Occupied East Jerusalem, with these areas declared "closed military zones", bringing the total number of demolitions of Palestinian properties in the West Bank since the start of 2014 to 359 homes and structures.

The Palestinian leadership condemns these illegal, destructive actions and calls on the international community, including the Security Council, to demand an end to all of Israel's illegal policies and practices in the Occupied State of Palestine and to demand that Israel, the occupying Power, rescind this latest decision for the seizure of Palestinian land. Should Israel continue to ignore the calls and the will of the international community in this regard we call for the immediate consideration of measures to compel Israel's compliance with international law and relevant United Nations resolutions, with the aim of bringing an end to this illegal, destructive colonization of occupied Palestinian land and salvaging the dim prospects for a viable two-State solution, before it is too late.

At the same time, we must draw the international community's attention to the continuing suffering of the Palestinian people in the Gaza Strip. While the ceasefire continues to hold, the reality in Gaza is one of an ongoing trauma due to the wanton killing and massive destruction inflicted by Israel, the occupying Power, on our besieged people. While emergency humanitarian aid has begun to reach civilians in need, including via the continued valiant efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, the World Food Programme, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and other humanitarian organizations on the ground, the disastrous impact of Israel's military onslaught has created unprecedented humanitarian needs for even the most basic living essentials, including clean water, with all of the health risks and socioeconomic consequences in this regard.

Food insecurity in Gaza remains high, with the majority of the population dependent on food aid for survival. At least 58,000 displaced Palestinians continue to shelter at UNRWA schools, while nearly 50,000 others continue to shelter with host families, with nowhere to return following the massive destruction of homes and entire neighbourhoods by the Israeli occupying forces, which has rendered more than 100,000 people homeless. The lives of Palestinian fishermen continue to be endangered as Israeli occupying forces persist in firing upon them and obstructing

their access to the six-mile nautical limit agreed to in the ceasefire agreement. In reality, despite the commitment in the ceasefire agreement to lift the restrictions, Israel continues to impose its immoral and inhumane blockade on Gaza.

Moreover, medical facilities in Gaza continue to be overwhelmed and lack the necessary supplies to properly treat the injured and sick, jeopardizing the lives of many civilians in need. In this regard, I regret to draw attention to the deaths of two more Palestinian victims of Israel's lethal assaults on Gaza, as another child, Ziad Al-Reefi, age 9, died of wounds sustained in an Israeli airstrike on Gaza City on 21 August, which also killed four other members of the Al-Reefi family, and Basim Ajjur, age 55, succumbed today to wounds sustained two weeks ago in an Israeli airstrike that hit his home and also claimed the life of his 20-year-old son, Saad. Their deaths raise the death toll from this latest Israeli military aggression on Gaza to more than 2,150 Palestinians, and the lives of many more critically wounded persons tragically remain at risk. Also today, another Palestinian civilian was killed by the occupying forces in the West Bank. Mohammed Naim Sabri Al-Qani, age 25, was shot and killed at a checkpoint near Qalqilya when soldiers fired upon a car carrying Palestinian workers, bringing the total killed since June 2014 in the West Bank to 33 Palestinians.

We appeal once again to the international community to give due attention to this grave crisis being suffered by the Palestinian people in the Occupied State of Palestine at the hands of Israel, the occupying Power, and to act collectively and immediately, in accordance with international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, to rectify this ongoing injustice, including via the necessary measures to hold Israel accountable for its war crimes against the Palestinian people. The Security Council in particular must act to uphold its Charter duties and address this crisis. The silence of the Council at this critical juncture following the ceasefire that brought an end to the deadly Israeli offensive against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip and destabilization of the situation is unacceptable. The Council must act forthwith and contribute to the international efforts to redress this crisis and to contribute towards the promotion of calm and ultimately salvage the diminishing prospects for a peaceful two-State solution, if at all possible.

This letter is in follow-up to our 520 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 27 August 2014 (A/ES-10/655-S/2014/634), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed against the Palestinian people. Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable, and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations